Remarks:

Reconsideration and allowance of the Claims of the present invention is respectfully requested. Claims 1-13 have been amended above. Claims 8, 9, 14 and 15 are withdrawn from consideration.

Response to Restriction Requirement

The Examiner imposed a three (3) way restriction requirement by telephone between the following groups of Claims:

I. Claims 1-7 and 10-13, drawn to a nonwoven material, classified in Class 442, subclass 361;

II. Claims 8-9, drawn to final products, classified in Class 384, various subclasses; and

III. Claims 14-15, drawn to a process of making, classified in class 162, various subclasses.

In response to the telephonic restriction requirement, Applicants provisionally elected Group I with traverse. Applicants reaffirm that election with traverse.

It is respectfully submitted that it is inappropriate to restrict Group I from Group II because Group II can not be adequately examined without searching the same classes and subclasses as those searched in examining Group I. This redundancy in work required of the Examiners by this restriction is contrary to the primary purpose of restriction requirements. Thus, this part of the restriction should be redrawn. Similarly, neither Group I nor Group II can be completely searched with out searching the appropriate classes and subclasses for Group III. Therefore, this part of the restriction requirement should be withdrawn.

Further, the restriction between Group I and Group II is actually an Election Requirement based on the assertion that Inventions I and II are mutually exclusive species. However, Claim 1 is obviously a linking claim which reads on all species in Groups I and II since all claims in Groups I and II depend on Claim 1. Therefore, when Claim 1 is allowable, restriction between these Groups must be withdrawn.

First Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hagen et al (U.S. Patent 5,688,370). Applicants strenuously traverse this rejection.

Hagen et al does not disclose either of the mixture ingredients recited in Claim 1 of the present invention. Specifically, Hagen et al does not disclose "a mixture dispersed therein of at least one fluoropolymer **floc**; and at least one wettable structural organic **floc**."

In contrast, Hagen et al discloses a sheet article consisting essentially of at least one sorptive synthetic polymer **pulp** selected from the group consisting of 1) aramid **pulp** or derivatives thereof, 2) a blend of aramid **pulp** or a derivative therof with polyolefin **pulp** or polyacylonitrile **pulp** or **fibrillated** polytetrafuoroethylene, and 3) a blend of ployacylonitrile **pulp** with pololefin **pulp**. Plup is not floc! Plup is not equivalent to floc! So Hagen et al does not disclose floc or any article containing floc. Hagan et al defines polymer **pulp** in Col. 3, lines 33-36, as "fibrid particles which are usually frazzled, i.e., or tattered condition, having a high specific surface area, and a high adsorptive capacity for water. In contrast, the present invention defines **floc** on page 7, lines 22-24, as "fibers that are cut to a short length". Floc is not fibrillated like pulp is. These two fibrous structures (i.e., pulp and floc) are quite different structurally and have substantially different properties and uses.

As such, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Second Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claims 1, 4, 10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hendren et al (U.S. Patent 4,886,578). In reply, claims 1, 4, 10 and 12 have been amended.

As now amended, independent claims 1, 10 and 12 recite a saturable "resin impregnable," nonwoven material. Support for this amendment is found on page 2, line 22 of the subject application. Claims 1, 10 and 12 also now recite the material has "a basis weight of about 17 g/m^2 to about 810 g/m^2". Support for this amendment is found on page 6, lines 29-32, of the subject

application. Claim 4 depends on, and therefore contains the limitations of, claim 1. Hendren et al does not disclose, or make obvious, either of these limitations.

Instead, Hendren et al discloses an oil-impregnatable insulating **board** comprising aromatic polyamide fibrous materials and polytetrafluoroethylene fibrous materials. In Col 3, line 31-32, Hendren et al discloses that its method produced samples with an average basis weight of 2165 g/m^2 which is much heavier than that now recited in the present invention. For the thickness disclosed in Hendren et al, it's board is oil-impregnatable, but not porous enough to be resin impregnatable as now recited in the present invention. Further, the product disclosed by Hendren et al is a rigid board, not a flexible paper like sheet like the present invention.

In view of these differences, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 2, 3, 5-7, 11 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hendren et al (U.S. Patent 4,886,578) in view of Gross (U.S. Patent 3,756,908). The Examiner admits that Hendren et al does not show a binder as recited in the present invention. As such, the Examiner relies upon a second reference, Gross, as showing a binder in nonwoven sheet structures made of aromatic polyamide fibrids and short aromatic polyamide fibers.

Gross discloses a nonwoven sheet structure made from a mixture of (1) 15-90 % by weight of non fusible aromatic polyamide fibrids and (2) about 10 to 85 % by weight of short aromatic polyamide fibers. Gross further states in Col. 4, lines 55-58, that binders, e.g., acylic polymers or epoxy resins, and the like, may also be added to the paper, either to the stock slurries, prior to sheet formation, or by conventional size-press addition to the formed sheet.

In contrast, Gross does not disclose the weight % of binder in the mixture as recited in claim 2 of the present invention. In fact, since the paper disclosed in Gross does not contain one of the two non-binder ingredients recited in the present claims, (i.e., Gross does not disclose at least one

fluoropolymer floc in its paper), one skilled in the art would not look to Gross to determine if a binder would be useful in the present invention, or what binder would be useful in the present invention, or how much binder would be useful in the present invention; as such, claim 2 of the present invention (which recites the use of up to about 30% of a binder in a nonwoven material with at least one fluoropolymer floc) is clearly not obvious in view of either (or any combination of both) of the applied references. Gross does not disclose the use of a binder comprising at least one fibrous material; so claim 5 is not obvious in view of either (or any combination of both) of the applied references. Gross does not disclose the use of a binder comprising at least one aramid fibrid; so claim 6 is not obvious in view of either (or any combination of both) of the applied references. Gross does not disclose the use of a binder comprising a mixture of at least one aramid and a resin; so claim 7 is not obvious in view of either (or any combination of both) of the applied references.

As such, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

The foregoing reasons are believed to comprise a full and complete response to the outstanding non-final Examiner's Office Action. Further, it is submitted that any basis for the rejections of the Claims has been obviated. Thus, Claims 1-15 are respectfully submitted to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration with subsequent allowance of Claims 1-15 is respectfully requested. If any matter remains to be resolved before

allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to call Applicants' attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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